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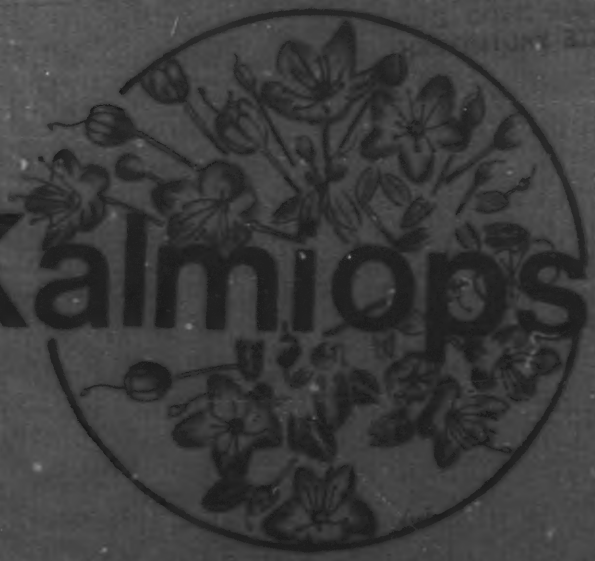
A GUIDE TO THE



Kalmiopsis

WILDERNESS

USDA
Pacific Northwest Region Forest Service
Siskiyou National Forest

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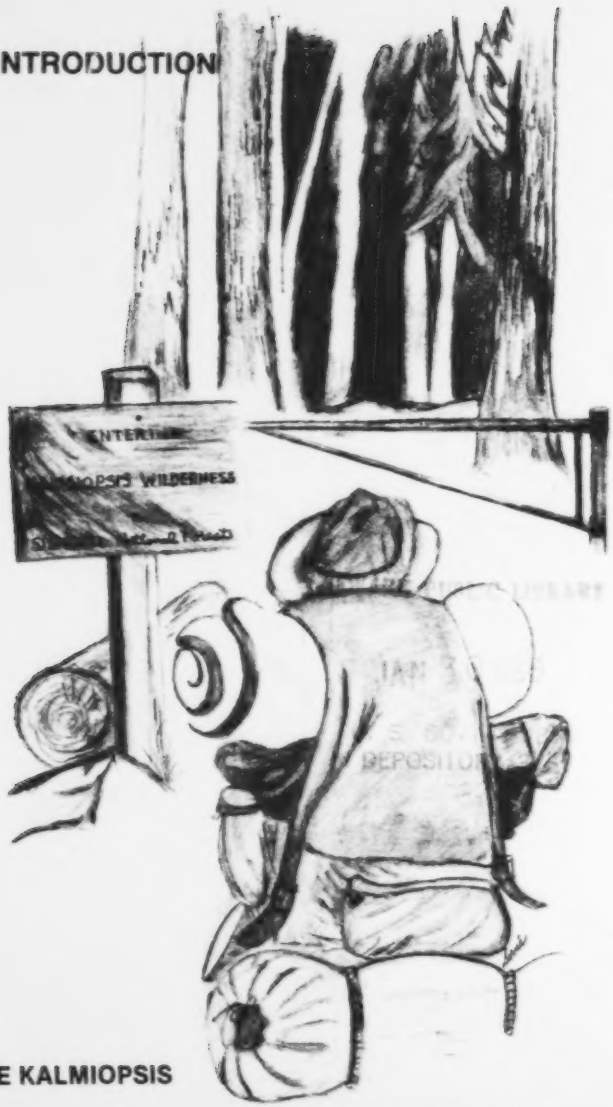
INTRODUCTION



THE KALMIOPSIS

is one of the least visited and least known wildernesses. It is located in southwest Oregon, straddling the Siskiyou Mountains of the Klamath Mountain Range, just north of the Oregon-California border. This guide is offered to increase knowledge of this wilderness and to tell ways by which it can be kept in an unspoiled condition.

READEX FICHE best copy available

The special characteristics of the Kalmiopsis were recognized early, and 79,000 acres were designated in 1946 as a Wild Area. With the passage of the National Wilderness Preservation System Act in 1964, the Kalmiopsis was given Wilderness status. The passage of the American Endangered Wilderness Act in 1978 increased its size to 179,862 acres. It is administered by the USDA - Forest Service to meet the legislated conditions of a wilderness for the enjoyment of people for all time.

GEOLOGY - THE BUILDING BLOCKS

The mountains of the Kalmiopsis are a tangled geologic puzzle of chaotically scrambled rocks that began on the Pacific Ocean floor some time between 100 and 200 million years ago. At that time, the coastline was inland to about the western edge of the Cascade Range. The higher peaks of the Kalmiopsis stood as islands offshore.

As sedimentary formations of molted lava intruded through the cracks. Some of the lava reached the surface through volcanoes, some crystallized underground to form granitic masses and other volcanic material. Some of the sedimentary material is present in a metamorphous state.

Between 2 and 3 million years ago, the ocean floor was uplifted, tipped, folded and pushed above sea level. As the land continued to push up, the natural erosion of rain and rivers cut channels through the softer material, giving us the Klamath Mountains as we know them today.

During the ice age, glaciers formed on the higher peaks of the Kalmiopsis, which moved large amounts of material. Within the transported sedimentary material was large quantities of gold, its movement by the ice and associated water being a natural hydrolic mining operation. The ice movement also left scratches, or striations, which can be seen today within "cirque" topography (caved-out basins such as Babyfoot Lake).

MINING

The Klamath Mountains have a long history of mining. Minerals deposited here have lured prospectors since the 1850's. Communities near the Kalmiopsis grew, boomed, and died while the different mineral rushes left their marks

on the land. Many of the trails in use today were once miners' routes, and many camps they once used are those used by Wilderness visitors today.

Scouting the area will reveal evidence of past mining activity; rusty tools, cable, pans, and sometimes an old cabin foundation. The chrome mines were worked until the 1950's and some gold mining continues today. Tailings and shafts left by the miners are visible. Ditches used to carry water for hydraulic mining remain as a monument to the wage laboreres, mostly Chinese, who dug them by hand.

A few valid mining claims are located in the Kalmiopsis. These claims can be worked only with an approved operating plan. As per the National Wilderness Preservation System Act of 1964, no new claims have been permitted since December 31, 1983.

UNUSUAL FLORA

Pre-ice age plant communities flourished on the offshore islands of the Kalmiopsis. They continued to exist through the ice age as the glaciers here were small, leaving relatively large areas of vegetation intact.

Meanwhile, similar vegetation on the mainland was destroyed under the continental ice shelf.

One small shrub to survive the ice age is the Kalmiopsis leachiana for which the Wilderness is named.

As different parent rock formations produce differing soil types, these in turn support differing vegetation. Islands of serpentine, a dark green, slick-looking material, weathers to lighter green flakes high in magnesium. The soils here support sparse and stunted vegetation.

The richer soils in the valleys are derived from volcanic and sedimentary rocks, producing growing conditions for larger trees and thick undergrowth. Between the bottoms and the ridgetops are steep slopes covered with mixtures of many species, which include: Douglas-fir, Brewer spruce, Port-Orford-cedar, white fir, a variety of oaks, madrone, chinquapin, and various species of large and small shrubs. The Kalmiopsis Wilderness is recognized as having the largest variety of plant species as any place in Oregon.

Botanists and flower buffs will enjoy the Wilderness in the spring when the large and unusual variety of plants are in bloom. They may find yet undiscovered or unnamed varieties. Since many species are threatened and endangered with extinction and nearly impossible to transplant, plant collecting is prohibited.

ANIMALS LIVE HERE, TOO

Visitors to the Kalmiopsis will find wildlife which generally inhabit southwestern Oregon. A variety of birds, as well as small mammals, can be seen. The larger animals, consisting of deer, bear, and some elk may also be met.

The deer and elk are harmless and fun to see, but the bear can be a nuisance, or if provoked, can be dangerous.

Most likely, bear will run if encountered on trails. Since they avoid human contact they don't usually bother campers - but wrap food well so that bears or other animals are not drawn by odors to eventually become nuisances.

HUNTING AND FISHING

State regulations for hunting and fishing apply. Fishing is not outstanding, but there are steelhead, salmon, and cutthroat trout in the Chetco and Illinois Rivers and some of the larger tributaries. Fall and late winter provide the best runs. Babyfoot, Valen, and Vulcan Lakes have very few trout, but other lakes here are too shallow for any fish.

Little hunting is done in the Kalmiopsis due to rugged, brush-covered topography.

MEETING SOME OF THE HAZARDS

Rattlesnakes are residents here. Watch where hands and feet are placed to avoid surprising one, and if encountered, give it time to get away. Watch - they don't always rattle!

Carry a good first aid kit and include a snakebite kit.

Scorpions are also present, but you probably will not see one.

Take precautions if you are allergic to insect stings or poison oak as both are common. Yellowjackets and hornets increase as summer progresses, and become more numerous during dry years. Nests can be in trees or in holes in the ground.

Poison oak can be found anywhere in the area, but is heaviest at lower elevations. Learn to recognize it, and use care when going through the brushy areas.

Anyone traveling through the Kalmiopsis should expect to be completely self-sufficient since visitation is low and help may be greatly delayed in case of emergency.

Springtime temperatures in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness are mild, and visitors should anticipate occasional rains. Summers are typically hot and dry, with temperatures easily reaching into the mid-nineties.

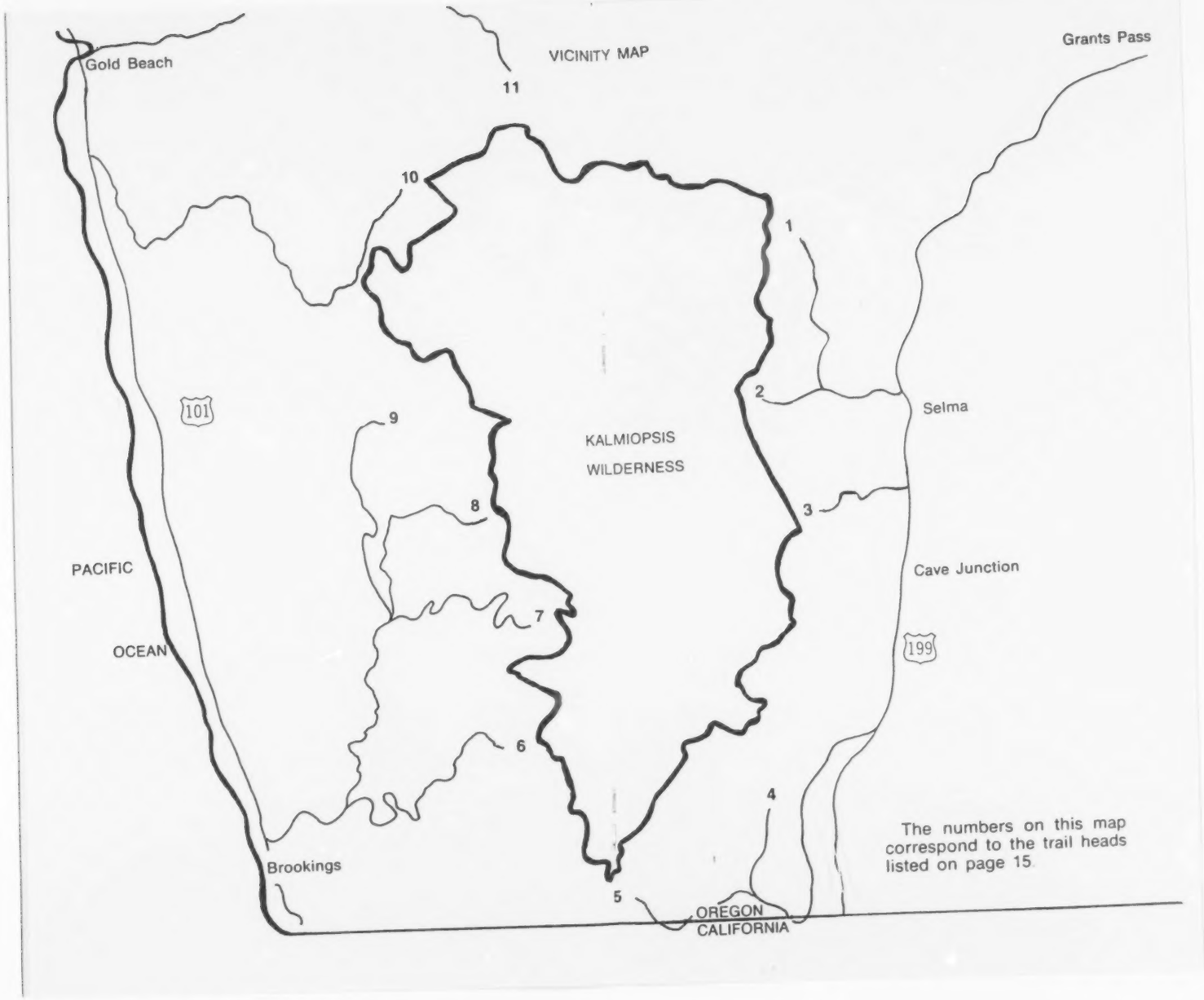
Nightime temperatures drop, and a jacket or sweater is welcome. Summer rain or thunderstorms are rare. Fall rains begin in early September and last intermittently until June, with snow common at the higher elevations.

WATER

Your greatest problem in the Wilderness may be the heat and dryness during the warmer months. Ridges are intensely hot by early afternoon with shade limited and water scarce.

While water is readily available along most trails early in the season by late summer, or during dry years, the smaller streams may exist only in their lower reaches, and water is scarce along ridges. Carry a full canteen!

Open water courses are easily contaminated. Treat or boil all water before using.


VICINITY MAP
Gold Beach
Grants Pass
11
10
1
2
Selma
101
9
KALMIOPSIS
WILDERNESS
8
3
PACIFIC
Cave Junction
7
OCEAN
199
6
4
The numbers on this map correspond to the trail heads listed on page 15.
Brookings
5
OREGON
CALIFORNIA

CAMPSITES

Most camping in the Kalmiopsis is at informally established sites. Since the area is steep and rocky, spaces suitable for camps are limited. Those sites that are level and convenient to water tend to be used over and over.

These traditional camps are marked on the Wilderness map and most are signed along the trail.

If you choose to find your own site away from these established camps, look for a place away from the main trail so other travelers can still have a feeling of solitude. It should be far enough from the stream and lake edges that the bank vegetation will not be disturbed. Horses should be tethered at least 200 feet from streambanks or lakeshores.

Try to pick a site with adequate drainage. Trenching and leveling of tent sites heavily impacts the fragile beauty of the area.

SANITATION

Since there are no facilities or improvements in a wilderness, the question of sanitation arises. The best way to deal with human waste is to bury it in holes dug five to six inches deep so it will readily decompose in the active bacterial layer of the soil.

Choose a site at least thirty feet from camp, and two-hundred feet from water. Toilet tissue lasts a long time above ground; so burn or bury it.

TRASH

Litter in a wilderness is a problem of carelessness. Basically, if it can be carried in, it should be carried out. Paper and some garbage can be burned, but fire will not destroy many things such as aluminum, glass, or cans. Burying garbage will attract bears - and they will dig it up - so pack it out, and leave no trace of your visit.

CAMPFIRE CARE

Campfires are allowed in the wilderness except during times of high forest fire danger; then, signs will be posted at trailheads. Be extremely careful with any fire; much of this area is very dry by early summer.

Keep campfires small and extinguish them with water, not dirt! Fires covered with dirt will retain hot coals longer, and flare again later. Use existing rock fire rings rather than establish new ones. Better yet, use a backpack type campstove, they are compact, light, and efficient, and often more dependable than a fire. Use your visit to practice No Trace camping.

GETTING TO THE TRAILS

There are several ways to find your way to one of the trailheads, but driving conditions vary. Here is a brief rundown. Check at a Forest Service Office for more details.

Use caution on any of these roads. Typically, they are winding gravel roads, and sometimes narrow. There may be road maintenance during summer. Traffic is unpredictable - you may encounter logging traffic.

FROM HIGHWAY 199

1 **Briggs Creek:** Forest Road 4103 from Selma is a long, bumpy dirt road without special problems.

2 **Chetco Pass:** Forest Road 4103 from Selma is very rough and requires slow speeds.

3 **Onion Camp and Babyfoot Lake Parking:** Eight Dollar Road (Forest Road 4201, off Highway 199) is the easiest and best maintained access. However, this trailhead has the highest rate of vanda ism.

4 **Mud Springs:** Forest Road 4402.112 is graveled to Buckskin Peak and then very rough to the wilderness boundary. Hiking is recommended beyond Buckskin Peak.

5 **Sourdough:** Forest Road 4402 is bumpy and long; very difficult when muddy.

FROM HIGHWAY 101

6 **Horse Creek/Red Mountain Trail:** Forest Road 1107 from Winkchuck Camp is well maintained.

7 **Vulcan Peak/Chetco Divide Trail:** Northbank Road (Forest Road 1376), and then Forest Road 1909. Both are well maintained.

8 **Upper Chetco Trail/Quail Prairie Mountain:** Northbank Road to Road 1917 is well maintained, with some washboard stretches.

9 **Tincup Trail:** Northbank Road to Spur Road 360 then to 365 is well maintained.

10 **Game Lake:** Hunter Creek Road (County Road 635, and Forest Road 3680 to Forest Road 3680.400) to Game Lake is well maintained gravel, but the last mile is dirt.

11 **Oak Flat:** Take Agness Road 33 then County Road 450. Route is well maintained.

RUGGED TRAVEL

Numerous rugged trails serve the area. Cross-country travel is nearly impossible through most of the area due to the dense growth of huckleberry, tanoak, chinquapin, and rhododendron. Since trails were developed along the most direct route, they proceed steeply up and down the grade with few switchbacks.

Be cautious and prepared for difficult trails. You may enounter places that are brushy, washed out, rocky, or indistinct. Where routes follow old roads they will be more clear, and possibly less steep. The use of motorized equipment is prohibited.

Please leave your dog at home! The rock formations in the Kalmiopsis literally "tear up" a dog's feet. Many have had to carry their dogs out of this Wilderness. If you do take your dog, remember, dog waste is as important to dispose of as human waste. Also, dogs often disturb wildlife.

TRAILS

Illinois River Trail #1162: 27 miles. Well maintained, well graded, the trail connects Oak Flat near Agness to Briggs Creek and skirts the rugged inner canyon in the downstream portion. Good views throughout.

Pine Flat Trail #1219: 1 mile. Quite steep and dry side trail to a big grassy flat along the Illinois River.

Collier Bar Trail #1182: 3 miles. Access to fishing spots and lower rugged Illinois River Canyon from Silver Creek to Collier Bar. Fairly steep. Fording the Illinois River is required, and is extremely hazardous before late summer.

Pupps Camp Way #1174: 6 miles. Good views of the Collier Creek-Illinois River drainage. Very steep as it approaches the river.

South Bend Mtn. Trail #1189: 1.5 miles. Off the Pupps Camp Way. Beautiful views into Illinois River Canyon.

Florence Way Trail #1219A: 3.5 miles. Connects Illinois River Trail to Pine Flat. Very steep. Provides a loop with the Pine Flat Trail.

Tincup Trail #1117 East: 6 miles. From the junction with Trail #1124 to Heather Mountain, the route is fairly easy with some short, steep stretches between Heather Mountain and Tincup Peak. The trail is level through old growth forest across Gold Basin.

Tincup Trail #1117 West: 7 miles. The trail is relatively easy with gentle grades from outside the wilderness boundary off Spur Road to Fall Creek. About a mile from there, the trail gets rougher as it crosses a large slide area. (Eventually, the east and west sections of this trail will connect, but right now the link is only a rough preliminary line.)

Tincup Creek Trail #1117A: Is a roughly brushed spur to Darling Creek.

Upper Chetco Trail #1102: 21 miles. Trail begins near Quail Prairie Lookout, drops to Boulder Creek, then climbs steeply to Lately Prairie and follows the ridge to Box Canyon. The trail rises and drops steeply to taggarts Bar where it meets an old road, then follows the Chetco River Canyon to Slide Creek and meets the old road again to follow up the Chetco Pass.

Johnson Butte Trail #1110: 6.3 miles. Trail begins as an old miner's road and follows the ridgeline out to Dry Butte and around the Valen Lake Basin to meet the Upper Chetco Trail. Excellent scenery from the open ridge; only moderate difficulty to hike.

Vulcan Lake Trail #1110A: 1.4 miles. Trail switchbacks to the top of the ridge, then drops across the slope to Vulcan Lake. A spur goes on to Lish Lake and a loop trail to Gardner mine. Well maintained, scenic route, good views of both lakes from ridge.

Gardner Mine Trail #1121: 2.6 miles. An old mining road that starts off the Johnson Butte Trail near old mining shafts and equipment, gradually winds its way around the upper Box Canyon Creek Drainage to the lower mine tailings.

Chetco Bar Trail #1172: 2 miles plus. An old "cat" road that continues across the river from Taggart Bar and parallels it to Chetco Bar.

Bailey Mountain Trail #1109: 6.9 miles. Fairly easy along the Chetco River from Slide Creek to Carter Creek through the beautiful inner canyon. The rise to Bailey Mountain is quite steep, fairly difficult. The trail then follows along a ridge and over to an old mining road where rock cairns mark the route to the Little Chetco River.

Bailey Cabin Trail #1109A: 2 miles. Trail is fairly steep in places. The only water, and a popular camp, is at a small meadow near the ruins of Bailey Cabin.

Kalmiopsis Rim Trail #1124: 30 miles. From the north end of Hayward Peak the Trail is brushy to Government Line Camp and virtually impassable. Brushy, but relatively level, to the junction with Tincup Trail. Fairly easy, rocky tread, up and down grades, sometimes merging with the old road to Onion Camp. Good views along the open ridge. From Onion Camp to near Canyon Peak, the trail follows Road #3680 and is easy to travel. The trail leaves from the gate and is fairly difficult to Doe Gap, with steep grades and an indefinite route. Water and camps are in the saddles.

Babyfoot Lake Trail #1124A: 2½ miles. Occasional short, steep places enroute to popular lake area.

Madstone Cabin Trail #1121 & Little Chetco Trail #1131-1: 11.7 miles. The Little Chetco Trail leaves Trail #1124 south of Canyon Peak and drops down the open ridge to Emily Cabin, then follows an easy route down the Little Chetco River. Fairly difficult over the ridge toward Madstone; somewhat steep, and difficult to follow.

Chetco Divide Trail #1210: 10 miles from Red Mtn. (near Vulcan Peak) to Doe Gap. Old roadway with generally favorable grades, rough and rocky. Magnificent views as the country is fairly open.

Red Mountain Trail #1107: 9 miles from the Chetco Divide Trail to Horse Creek. Another wilderness access route. Fairly steep and brushy.
Navy Monument Trail #1107A: 1.5 miles from the Red Mtn. Trail to the South Fork of the Chetco River. Old "cat" road, steep, goes to site of monument erected to a Navy plane that crashed here about 1944, killing all aboard.
Vulcan Peak Trail #1112: 1 mile from Chetco Divide Trail to top of Vulcan Peak. Old Lookout site. Good views.

REMEMBER TO REGISTER

Wilderness permits are not required, but every trailhead in the Wilderness has a registration box. The information gathered here influences how the area is managed. Please fill out a card for your party.

HEAVY USE AREA

Babyfoot Lake and Vulcan Lake are both small, with scenic settings and easy access. This, unfortunately, results in site disturbance. Both lakes seem to accumulate trash. Campers should avoid these areas and spread use to less visited areas.

Boulder Creek Camp and Slide Creek Camp are both about three miles from a trailhead, and very popular for weekend trips. They are both along the Chetco River. Careless campers have abused these traditional sites, so please tread lightly.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Maps and more detailed information is available at Ranger District Offices. They also have handouts on a variety of topics, and can sell you a map of the area.

Any information from returning hikers is always welcome. Report trail conditions or route difficulties. Your feedback is very useful in managing the Wilderness and helpful in recognizing any problem area.

You can write to these addresses for maps and information:

Chetco Ranger District
555 Fifth Street
Brookings, OR 97415
(503) 469-2196

Galice Ranger District
Post Office Building
P.O. Box 1131
Grants Pass, OR 97526
(503) 476-3830

Siskiyou National Forest
Supervisor's Office
200 NE Greenfield Road
P.O. Box 440
Grants Pass, OR 97526
(503) 479-5301

Gold Beach Ranger District
1225 So. Ellensburg, Box 7
Gold Beach, OR 97444
(503) 247-6651

Illinois Valley Ranger District
26568 Redwood Highway
Cave Junction, OR 97523
(503) 592-2166

Powers Ranger District
Powers, OR 97466
(503) 439-3011

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